

**Public Hearing on FY24 Capital Budget and supplemental appropriations to the FY23  
Capital Budget and amendments to the FY23-28 CIP – February 9, 2023  
Richard Montgomery Cluster PT(S)A Testimony**

RICHARD MONTGOMERY HS \* JULIUS WEST MS \* BEALL ES \* COLLEGE GARDENS ES  
RITCHIE PARK ES \* BAYARD RUSTIN ES \* TWINBROOK ES

Presented by Amy Ackerberg-Hastings (RM Cluster Co-Coordinator and RM HS parent)

Good evening, President Glass, members of the County Council, and staff. Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the CIP allocation for MCPS. My name is Amy Ackerberg-Hastings, and I am the parent of a Richard Montgomery HS freshman as well as one of the cluster coordinators for the 7 Richard Montgomery cluster PT(S)As. Our community wants to focus on three issues tonight:

- The stability and sustainability of funding for the Capital Budget;
- The construction timeline for Crown High School;
- The intersection of CIP projects with school safety and security.

First, while we understand the decisions that went into changing the funding formula for the Capital Budget over the past few years, it is frustrating that the instability inherent in relying on the recordation tax for a significant portion of revenue is having an effect at the exact same time that construction costs for projects that are already programmed are rising dramatically. We think the staff's proposal to make the recordation tax progressive has potential, but we also ask that the Council work on generating additional ideas for stable revenue streams so that much-needed capital projects can stay on track for timely completion.

After all, none of the items in MCPS's request for the 2023–2028 funding cycle are extravagant or unnecessary. Rather, the physical conditions at Burtonsville ES and Silver Spring International MS have been abysmal for years, while overcrowding at JoAnn Leleck ES and Greencastle ES are longstanding issues. The addition at Northwood HS, reopening of Woodward HS, and construction of Crown HS will bring opportunities and relief to those communities. The maintenance and lifecycle requests also address unsafe, unhealthy, chronic problems at a large number of other schools.

One of the items with the most direct relevance to the Richard Montgomery cluster is the projected 2027 completion of Crown HS, which thus is the second issue discussed in this testimony. Richard Montgomery HS received two more portable classrooms for the 2022–2023 school year, bringing its total to nine. In addition to reflecting RM's years of being over capacity and requiring MCPS to expend funds on relocatables that then cannot be invested in permanent structures, on January 13 and January 25 these spaces reminded all of us that they pose extra security challenges to ensuring the safety of every child and staff member on every campus. The land for Crown HS has a time limit, the site plan is well-executed and reasonable, and the surrounding schools all support the project. Please do not force the construction of Crown HS to be delayed further.

Finally, as you know, well-built and well-maintained schools contribute to the healthy development and success of students in many ways beyond academics, and, in turn, improve the economic health of their wider communities. Because the two incidents at Richard Montgomery

are very fresh for our community, I will emphasize that a fully-funded CIP helps MCPS install security measures that work in concert with increased staffing and the development of positive, cooperative institutional cultures to ensure the safety of each person at every school. In RM's case, one of the possible solutions recommended by an MCPS security audit conducted after the January 13 and January 25 incidents involves alarming multiple exterior doors, since posting security staff at every door every day is not realistic. If that measure is implemented, it will be paid for out of the CIP allocation.

Thank you for your attention to these requests.